



2020 Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Study (CBAMS) Survey and Focus Groups Report Findings Presentation

March 14, 2019



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Outline

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- 2 Study Design
- 3 Key Findings
 - A Intent to Respond
 - B Knowledge Gaps
 - C Potential Concerns & Attitudinal Barriers
- 4 2020 CBAMS Motivators, Conclusions, and Recommendations



1 CBAMS Overview



CBAMS Overview

Purpose



Research Questions

1. Who intends to respond to the census?
2. Where do gaps in knowledge about the census exist?
3. What barriers would prevent people from completing the census?
4. What would motivate people to complete the census?

Methodology



Quantitative Survey



Qualitative Focus Groups

2 Study Design



Study Design: CBAMS Survey

The 2020 CBAMS Survey was administered from February to April 2018 to **50,000 addresses** in all **50 states and Washington, D.C.**



Questionnaire consisted of **61 questions**



Adults 18+ were eligible to participate via mail or web



Households in the sample **received a prepaid incentive** and up to **five mailings** inviting them to participate



Oversampled Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, and other small-sample races.



Roughly **17,500 people** responded to the survey

Study Design: CBAMS Focus Groups

2020 CBAMS Focus Groups held in March and April 2018.



42 focus groups conducted with **11 audiences** across **14 locations**



16 focus groups were **non-English**



Focus group transcripts went through a rigorous process to ensure intercoder reliability



Transcripts were analyzed **to identify themes** among response barriers and motivators

Study Design: CBAMS Focus Groups

2020 CBAMS Focus Groups conducted among the 11 audiences.

American Indian and Alaska Native

Black or African American

Chinese – Cantonese and Mandarin

Low Internet Proficiency

Middle Eastern and North African

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI)

Rural

Spanish (Puerto Rico)

Spanish (U.S. Mainland)

Vietnamese

Young and Mobile

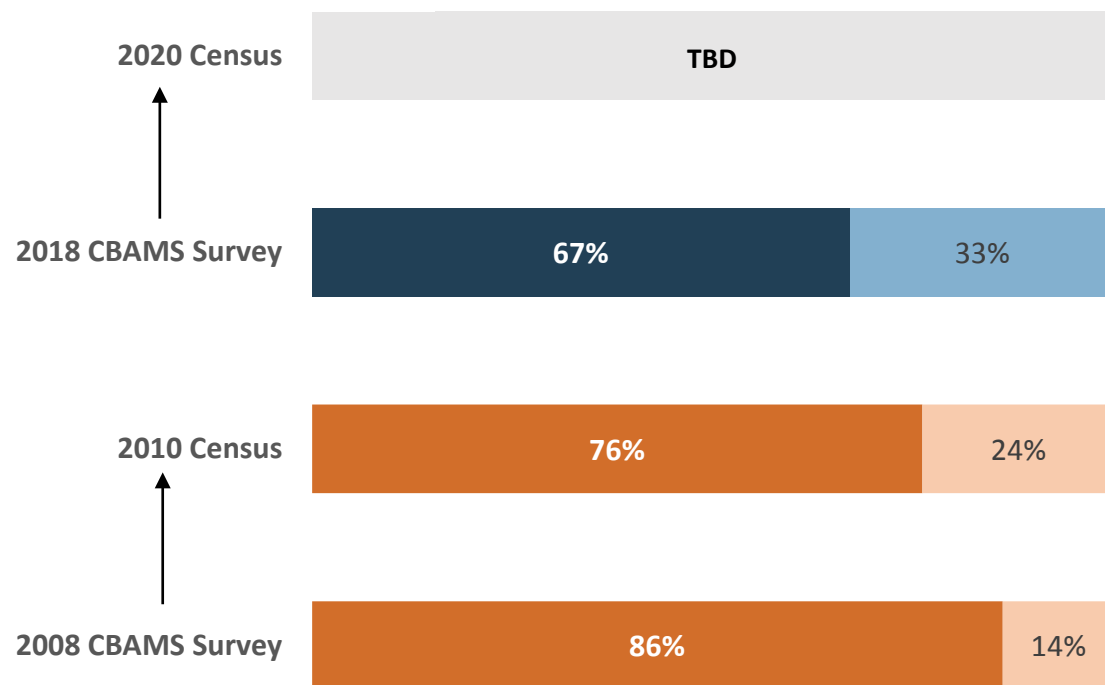


Intent to Respond



Two out of three said they were likely to respond

CBAMS Survey and Decennial Census
Measured vs Observed Response Rate



The mail return rate to the 2010 Census was **10 pts lower** than measured in the 2008 CBAMS Survey



CBAMS measures those who are “extremely” or “very” likely to fill out the census form if the census were held today.

Note: Due to methodological differences, direct statistical comparisons between 2008 and 2018 survey are not appropriate.

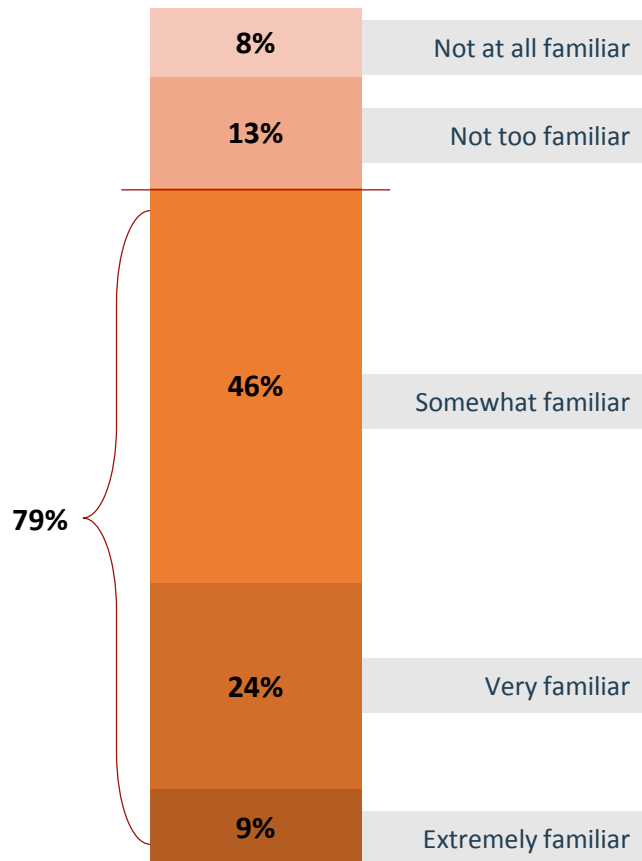


Knowledge Gaps



Many know the census basics but not much more

How familiar are you with the U.S. census?



“

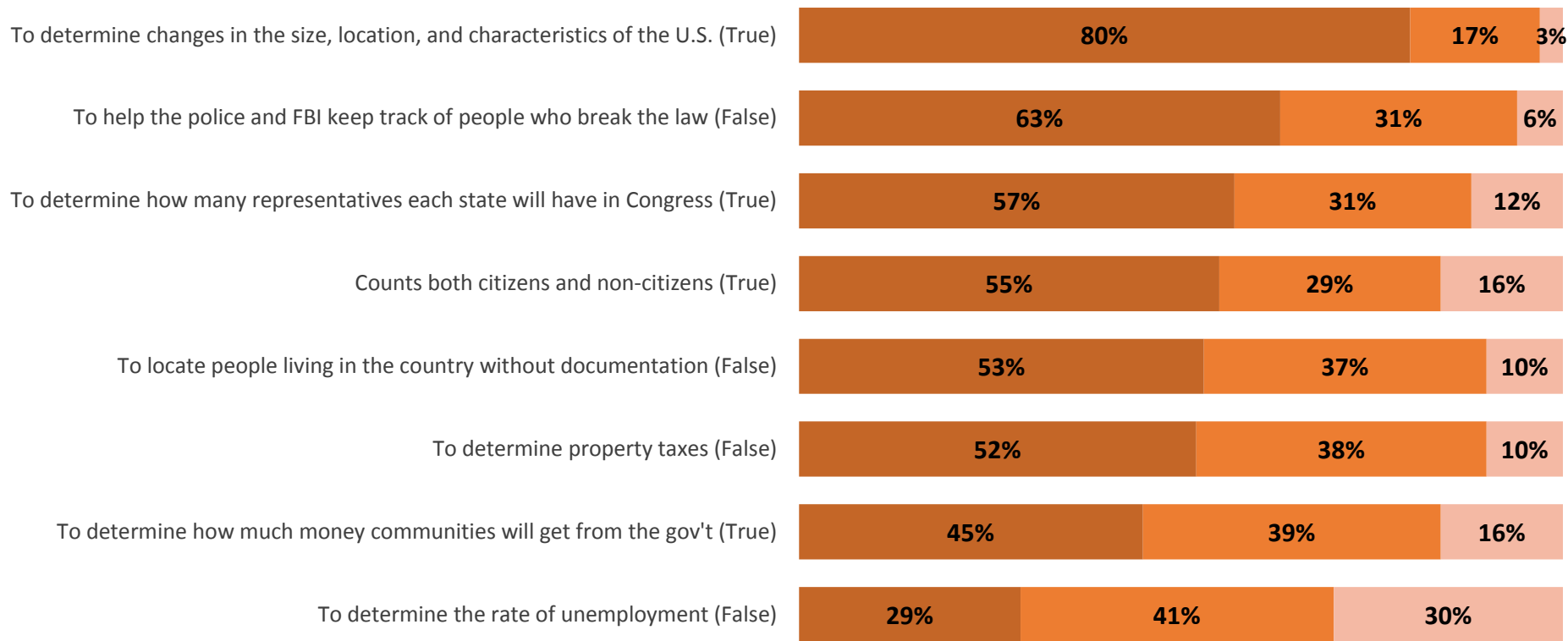
In their own words

*[What comes to mind when I hear 'census'?] I don't know. **Isn't that like the people that want to know like everything?** They send you letters to your house.”*

— American Indian and Alaska Native

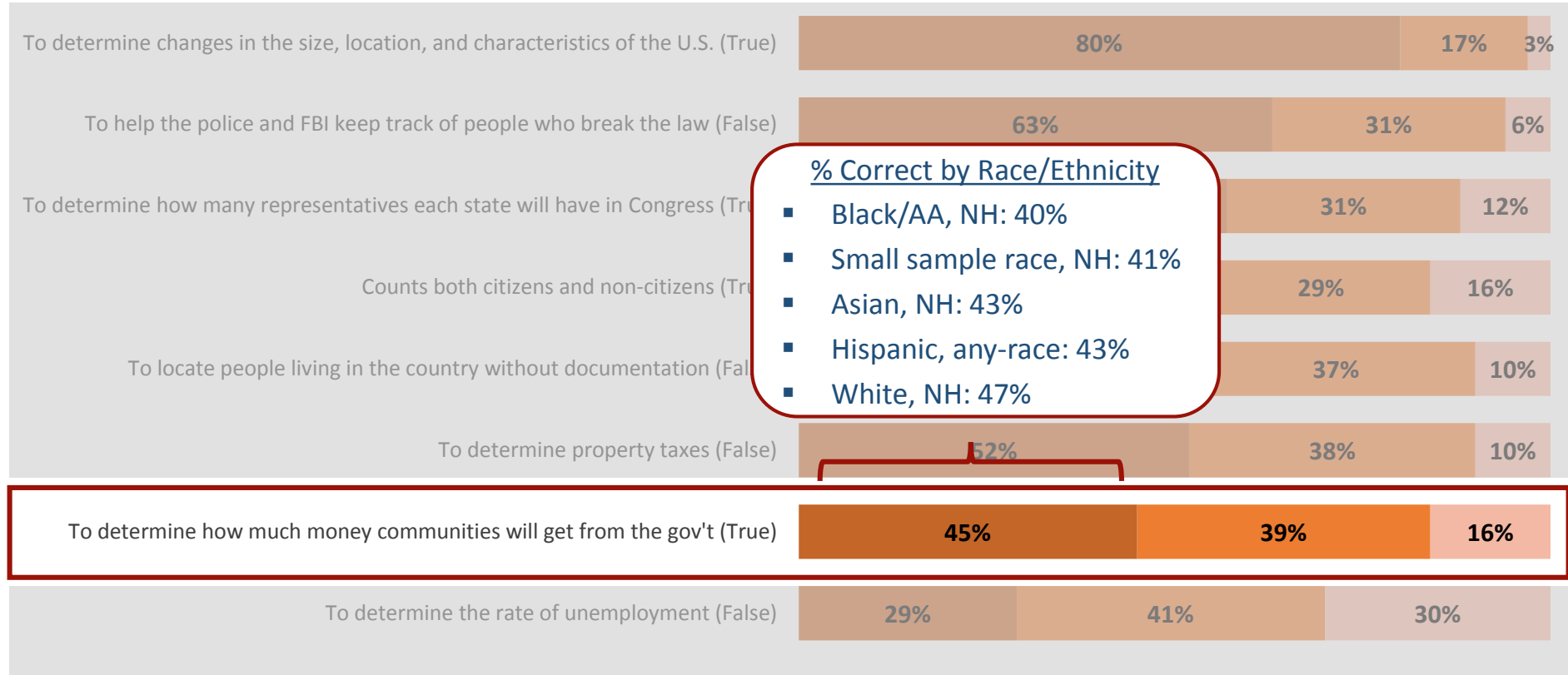
Overview of knowledge gaps

As you understand it, will the 2020 Census be used in any of the following ways or not?



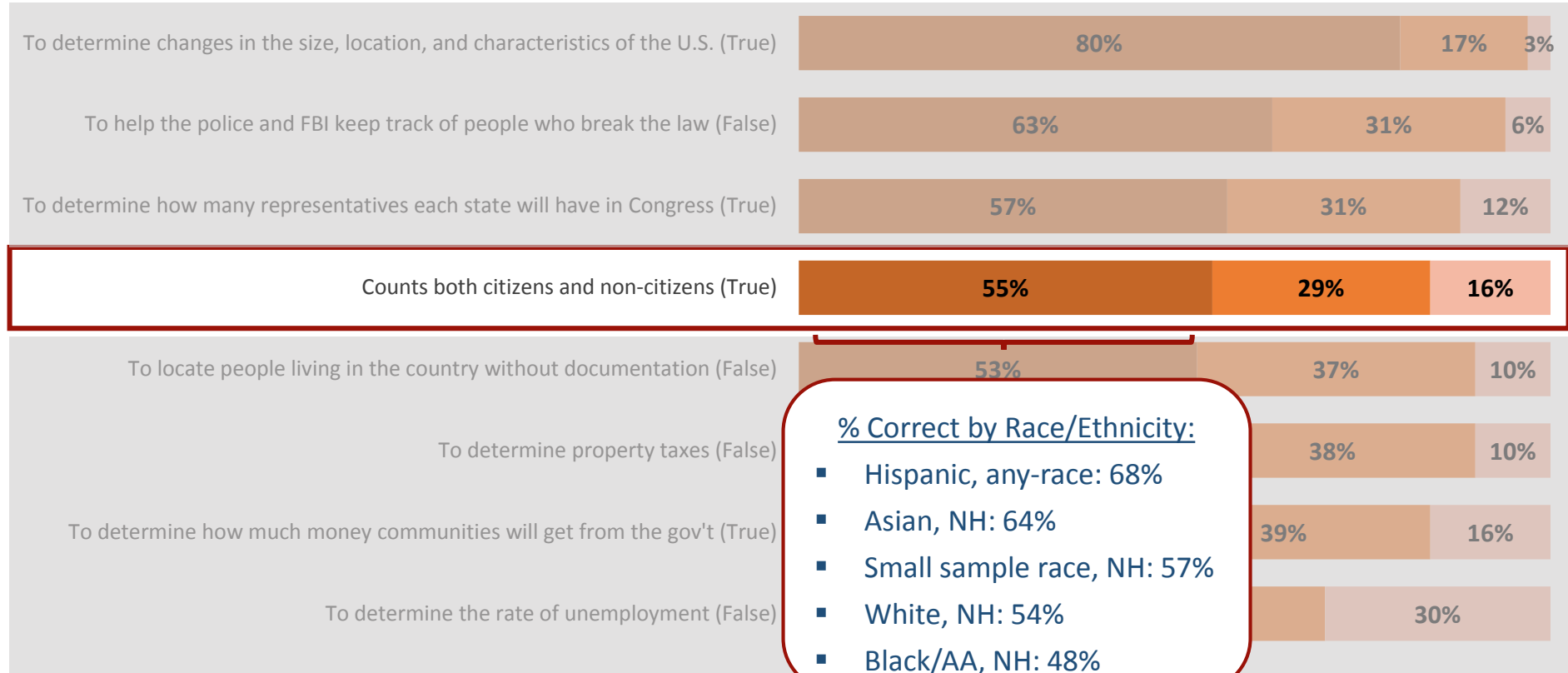
Knowledge about funding from census data varies little by race and ethnicity

As you understand it, will the 2020 Census be used in any of the following ways or not?



Hispanics & Asians more likely to know census counts citizens and non-citizens than others

As you understand it, will the 2020 Census be used in any of the following ways or not?





Potential Concerns & Attitudinal Barriers



Potential barriers to participation in the 2020 Census



Apathy & Efficacy



Concerns about data
confidentiality & privacy



Fear of
Repercussions

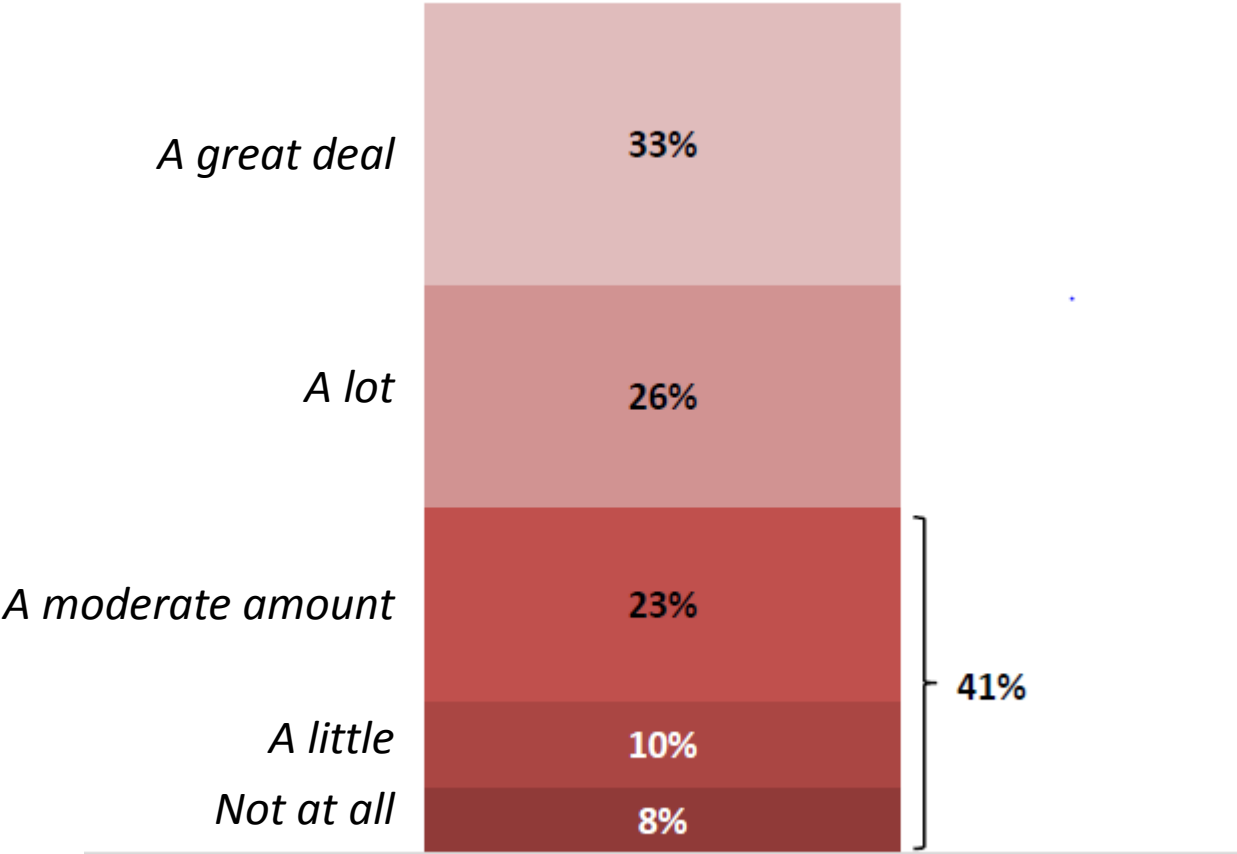


Distrust in Government



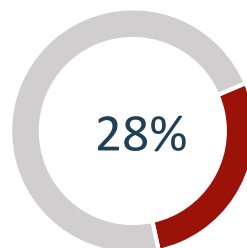
Few Perceived
Personal Benefits

Does it matter if I'm personally counted?



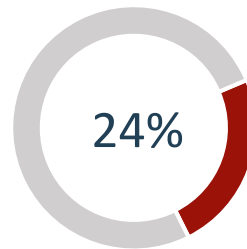
How much, if at all, do you think it matters if you personally are counted in the 2020 Census?

About one-quarter of respondents worry about confidentiality



were “extremely concerned” or “very concerned” that the Census Bureau would not keep their answers confidential.

About one-quarter of respondents are concerned the census shares data



were “extremely concerned” or “very concerned” that the Census Bureau would share their answers with other government agencies.

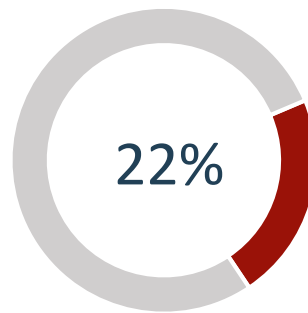


Confidentiality Concerns

“

Every single scrap of information that the government gets goes to every single intelligence agency, that's how it works...individual level data. Like, the city government gets information and then the FBI and then the CIA and then ICE and military...”
— Middle Eastern and North African

Nearly 1 in 4 respondents fear that their answers to the 2020 Census will be used against them



were “extremely concerned” or “very concerned” that their answers would be used against them.

Some focus group participants felt the government would use their data against their community



“

Harm to the Community

*They could say, ‘Look, this community has, like, X amount of race or something; let’s avoid them, or let’s define that area’... you can see it sometimes where **they don’t fund certain schools because it’s in certain ‘bad areas.’**”*

— Middle Eastern and North African

...or them personally



“

Harm to them Personally

*[Someone might choose not to participate because] **it can come back and haunt them...** Like if you get food stamps, ...and they will be afraid that it's going to affect their food stamps if they report somebody else is there.”*

— Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander

The citizenship question may be a major barrier



1. **Its purpose is to find undocumented immigrants**
2. **The political discourse is targeting their ethnic group** – residents and citizens may also feel endangered

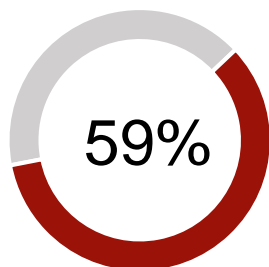
“*[The purpose is] to make people panic... Some **people will panic because they are afraid that they might be deported.***”
— Vietnamese

“*ICE is working with different groups on **deportation sweeps, and it would make me feel like I'm aiding in that.** They're doing a lot of illegal stuff, and so I wouldn't fill out any of the questions.*”
— Middle Eastern and North African

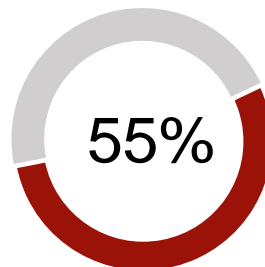
“*For this census, a lot of people are afraid. **It doesn't matter if they ask you whether or not you're a citizen.** The first question they ask you, are you Hispanic or Latino? And that's enough. That's all they need. And people are scared.*”
— Spanish (U.S. Mainland)

“*[Latinos will not participate] out of fear...[there] is **practically a hunt** [for us] ...**Latinos are going to be afraid to be counted because of the retaliation that could happen** - it's like giving the government information, saying, 'Oh, there are more here.'*”
— Spanish (U.S. Mainland)

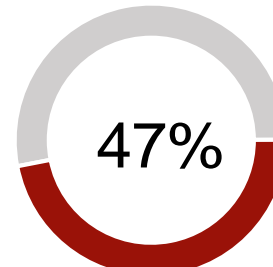
Distrust is highest for the federal government



said they did not trust
the federal government



said they did not trust
their state government

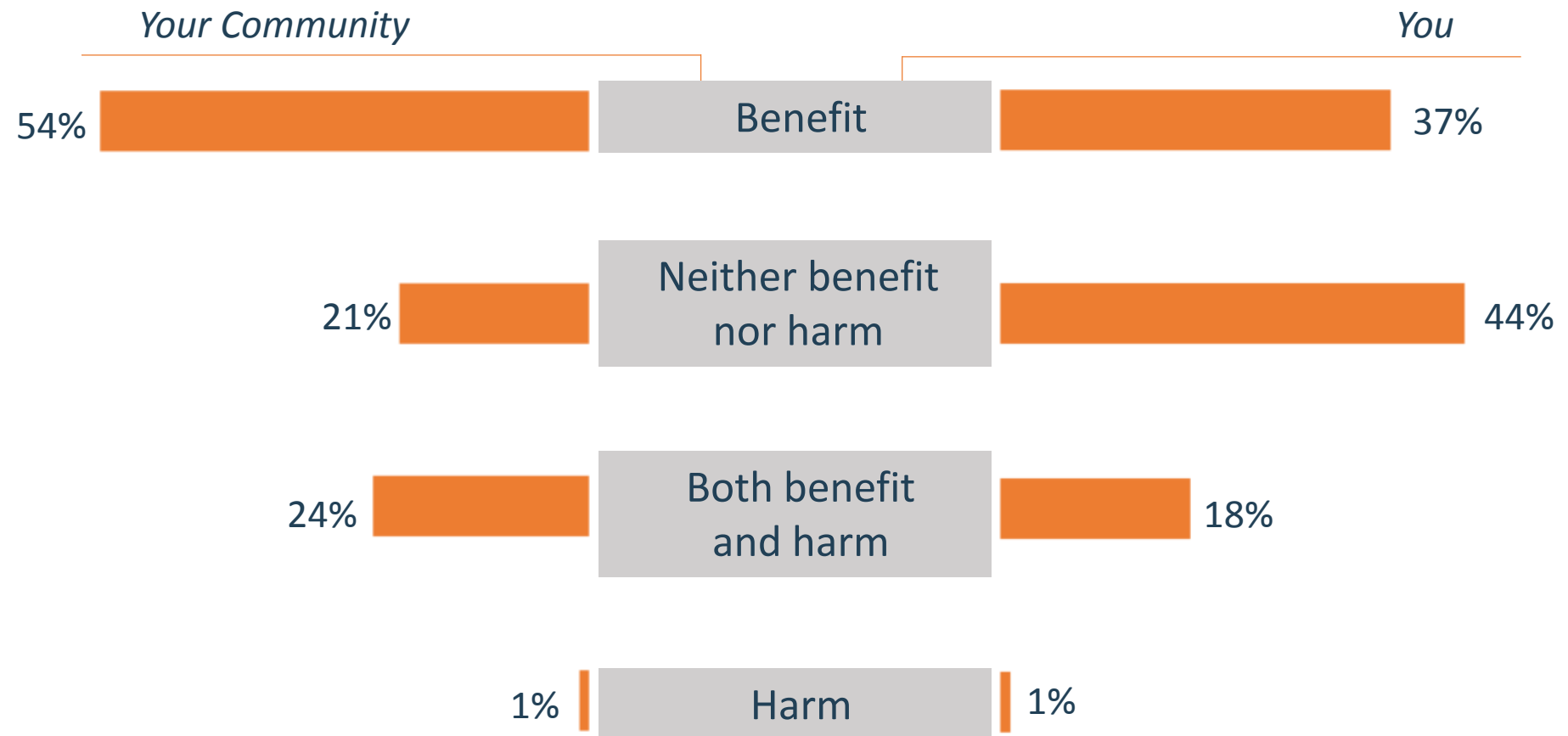


said they did not trust
their local government

More feel the 2020 Census benefits the community than them personally



Do you believe answering your 2020 Census form could benefit or harm [your community/you] in any way?



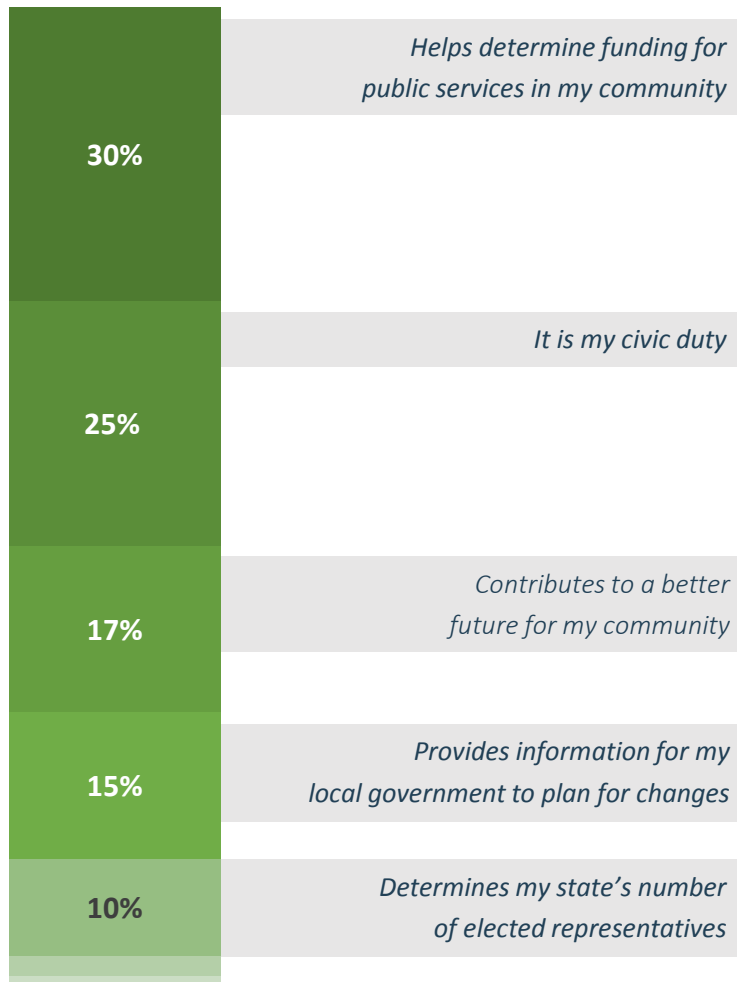


2020 CBAMS

Motivators, Conclusions, and Recommendations



Connecting Census & Community Funding



Although people identified “helps determine funding for public services in my community” as the most important reason to fill out the census...

...only **45%** of people know that the census is used to determine community funding.

Big Picture Conclusions



Knowledge Gaps

- There is a general lack of knowledge about the census' scope, purpose, and constitutional foundation



Barriers

- Apathy and lack of efficacy
- Privacy concerns
- Fear of repercussions
- Distrust of government
- Few Perceived Personal Benefits



Motivators

- Funding for community needs is the most influential motivator across audiences
- Services such as hospitals, fire departments, and schools are important to many respondents

- ✓ Connecting census participation to support for *local* communities may address apathy and lack of efficacy
- ✓ Informing the public on the census' scope, purpose, and process may address privacy and confidentiality concerns and fear of repercussions
- ✓ Engaging trusted voices may address trust-based concerns, especially among the most skeptical and disaffected

Questions

1. The CBAMS Survey found that concerns about data security and confidentiality may be a barrier to decennial response, especially for racial and ethnic minorities. What data security and confidentiality innovations should census implement and partners highlight when communicating with concerned residents?
2. During the 2020 Census, what strategies should we use to evaluate whether different communications strategies worked (for example, whether messages to different audiences were effective in promoting self-response)?
3. After 2020, what gaps in understanding the public's mindsets, motivations, and barriers to the decennial census response could be addressed in mid-decade testing?